

digitally storing both selected public key expiry data and selected private key expiry data for association with a new digital signature key pair;

associating the stored selected expiry data with the new digital signature key pair to affect a transition from an old digital signature key pair to a new digital signature key pair;

determining whether a digital signature key pair update request has been received from a client unit;

receiving a new digital signature key pair from the client unit in response to the digital signature key pair update request; and

wherein the step of associating the stored selected expiry data includes creating a new digital signature certificate containing the selected public key expiry data selected for the client generating the digital signature key pair update request, a user public key, a user name and a signature of the multi-client manager unit.

#### REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request the entry of the Preliminary Amendment prior to examination.

Applicants have added a new claim 27 for examination which is believed to be allowable over the prior art since the prior art of record does not disclose alone or in combination, among other things, providing, by a multi-client manager unit, selectable private signing key expiry data and selectable digital signature expiry data for a plurality of clients and associating the stored selected expiry data with the new digital signature key pair to effect the transition from an old digital signature key pair to a new digital signature key pair based on the digital signature key pair update request by creating a new digital signature certificate wherein the new digital certificate contains at least the selected public key expiry data, a user public key, a user name and a signature of the multi-client manager unit.